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ABSTRACT

The activities described in this guide have been collected in an effort to suggest an underlying philosophy for a language arts curriculum in nursery schools and to outline and suggest a variety of methods by which this philosophy can be put to use. Materials commonly found in the classroom, outside, and in the home, and well-known songs and games are here presented in the context of promoting language development in the preschool child. The guide is divided into four sections: (1) using visual symbols in communication; (2) motoric expression; (3) speaking; and (4) listening. Each section begins with a rationale followed by a list of activities grouped in approximate order of difficulty. (ED)

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Language Activities Manual

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INDIANAPOLIS COOPERATIVE
NURSERY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES IN NURSERY SCHOOL

A GUIDE FOR

PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

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The Language Activities Manual represents a joint effort on the part of all Co-operative Nursery School Teachers in Indianapolis who initially contributed ideas in the local Co-operative Nursery School Teacher's Study Group. These activities and ideas were collected and compiled by the Activities Manual Committee members: Jo Drummond, Phyllis Kikendall, Cindy Tipton and Marge Fadely. The actual organizing and writing was done by Rochelle Cohen and Diane Dyer.

It is hoped that the Activities Manual will be a resource to all those helping young children learn and grow.

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INTRODUCTION

The material contained in this Guide has been collected, edited and organized under the auspices of the Teachers' Group of the Indianapolis Council of Preschool Cooperatives. The purpose of this effort has been to suggest an underlying philosophy for the language arts curriculum of the nursery school, and, just as important, to outline and suggest a variety of methods by which this philosophy can be put to use.

The Guide is divided into four sections: "Using Visual Symbols in Communication"; "Motoric Expression"; "Speaking"; "Listening". Each section begins with a rationale and is followed by a list of activities, grouped, as much as possible, in order of difficulty. Because language arts encompasses an endless number of abilities, all of which are inter-related in thinking conceptually, any attempt to group these abilities is arbitrary. The four divisions were chosen because they relate directly to the categories usually designated under the language arts curriculum programs of most public schools. Although nursery schools are not conceived as preparatory schools for the elementary grades, they must surely lay the appropriate groundwork on which later learning is built. Thus the activities suggested for preschoolers in each section would lead naturally into those kinds of academic experiences suitable to kindergarten and first grade developmental levels.

Basic to the entire Guide are the precepts of Jean Piaget. Piaget has characterized the nursery school child as being in a transitional period, moving into the pre-operational level. He is perceptually oriented, judging things by how they look to him. He tends to center on one variable only, usually the variable that stands out visually. He has difficulty realizing that an object can possess more than one property and thus can belong to several classes at the same time. He moves steadily, but in a sequential fashion, towards the stage at which he can think in abstract terms. He needs to go through each step along this developmental route: omitting a step makes later progress difficult.

Because this Guide is activity oriented, teachers should be able to use immediately the many suggested methods and activities. However, the creative teacher will go beyond what is listed and find new ways of increasing the effectiveness of her language arts program. Good teaching will always be half science and half art.

USING VISUAL SYMBOLS IN COMMUNICATION

In no other area of the curriculum do the controversies rage as they do around the subject of teaching reading. Reading is the key! Other areas of the curriculum are dependent on reading skill. When is the best time to begin teaching a child to read? What is the best way? Should we start sooner or wait until later? What part does incidental learning play in the learning-to-read process? Is the carefully structures reader-textbook system the best way over all?

Fortunately, the preschool teacher is generally far-removed from the reading methods battle. She can concentrate instead on the laying or enhancing of foundations which will contribute to today's success and later academic success.

The pleasure of books, and poetry; this is a vital attitude which the child must develop in his early years, an attitude which will motivate him towards wanting to learn to read. Being read to, looking at books, enjoying the beauty of language must be a part of every preschooler's experience.

Reading is a visual process, requiring a sophisticated level of visual discrimination. Activities which develop visual discrimination are a necessary part of the nursery school curriculum.

Further, since it is useless to read a word, mechanically, if the meaning of the word is not clear, the young child needs guidance in developing and exploring his vocabulary. Piaget's discoveries remind us that the concrete experience must come first: we must use first-hand experiences as we work to expand vocabulary. Later success in mathematics is built on the concrete experiences provided in the good nursery school. "Two" has no meaning until there is a sensory acquaintance with two objects. "Two and three more make five" has to be seen first, and handled, to be learned.

Reading involves a complicated movement of the eyes. What is done at the preschool level to establish right and left, to help the child along the normal route of perceptual development, has enormous importance to his later skill as a reader.

Finally, to read meaningfully, the child needs a broad conceptual framework into which he can fit the myriad facts

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he accumulates. Field trips, science experiments, a strange pet which visits the schoolroom, the picnic shared with a Headstart group: these are experiences which broaden a child's mental stature and, with proper interpretation by the adults in his life, expand his vocabulary and his outlook.

The aspects of the curriculum which will lead into learning to read can be said to include enjoyment of books, visual discrimination, vocabulary development and experiences which contribute to the establishing of conceptual frameworks.

ENJOYMENT OF BOOKS

It should be no trick to read aloud to a small child. Most children thoroughly enjoy the experience. The problems come when the reader forgets that reading aloud is a two-way process, and is not sensitive enough to the reactions of his audience. Too, there are those who are dull readers: something about the inflections of their voices can make a sonnet from Elizabeth Browning sould like the instructions for putting together a jungle gym. These unfortunates need to practice with a tape recorder and if no amount of experience improves the condition, to find someone else to do the reading aloud. Story reading is too important to be done badly. Even an experienced, successful reader needs to run through a book beforehand.

Certainly, reading aloud needs a great deal of quiet listening: building boats at the workbench should probably be postponed until another time. However, if the reader is skillful and the book is well-chosen, naval architecture will be abandoned in short order. The teacher's attitude (a sort of "you-are-going-to-love-this-it's-a-marvelous-book" outlook) makes the difference. Those who follow the "now-it-is-story-time-and-you-all-need-to-sit-down-and-get-quiet" approach often run into difficulties.

Every teacher has her favorite books and there are all time favorites such as "Caps For Sale" and "The Three Bears" which scarcely ever fail. Children's literature can be of great help to the new teacher. Generally, children like what adults do, on a less sophisticated level; colorful main characters, with which they can identify, an interesting

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conflict, and a satisfying conclusion. Whimsy and fantasy are wonderful if these other conditions are met. For instance, Frances may be a badger but her bedtime tactics are very familiar. Repetition of phrases ("millions and billions and trillions of cats") and situations "The wolf's blowing down pigs' houses) are very attractive to children.

A good story has momentum. Chaos awaits the reader who stops too often to answer questions or have everyone count the green shoes. In general, it is better to talk about a book afterwards and even better than that, to let the story stand on its own merits. Successful books are asked for again and again.

Who will choose the books? Probably the teacher herself is the best selector. She knows what she likes and needs. She must genuinely enjoy the stories she reads because small children are quick to spot a phony enthusiasm. Nothing is worse than reading a story because it is generally considered a classic. Some people enjoy the Pooh stories and consequently can read them successfully. She who finds Milne cloying should avoid him like the chickenpox.

The books in a nursery school should be changed often and should include a variety of offerings. There are the books chosen for the sole pleasure of their appeal to the group at story time. There are books to be read to one child at a time (perhaps using his name throughout the story), books for a special child who is feeling dreary about his new baby sister, for one whose parents have gone on a vacation. There are books for specific instructional purposes: a book about colors, about fire engines, about getting ready for winter. These books can be looked through and discussed by the group at other times than the read-aloud period. There would always be picture books, chosen for their sheer eye appeal, and with all of these, a quiet place for a child to sit and contentedly turn the pages. Books arranged in attractive inviting manner.

The illustrations of books are of great interest to children and it is fun to mention, casually, before reading a book that the name of the writer is such and such, the illustrator, so and so. Children like to examine the pictures in books and speculate on how they were done: with crayon, with chalk, with paints, with paper and paste, or with a camera, as in the "Lonely Doll" books. When reading

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aloud, be certain to hold a book where every child can see. It is less frustrating to maintain the book in one position throughout its reading than to lay it in the lap periodically, or between pages. In a sense, children read along with the reader, who reads the words, while they read the pictures.

Small children learn quickly, and more from a teacher's attitude than from her instructions, that books are precious and should be gently handled. Even Threes can be taught to appreciate the marvel of books; one person can tell a story but when a story is written down in a book, a vast number of people can enjoy his tale, without his even being present. A good continuing interest project is to investigate the ways that people have written down stories over the years. "Childcraft" has an interesting section on printing and many youngsters are fascinated and will want to make "clay" tablets (out of flour and salt dough), scratched with toothpick hierglyphics and put to dry in the sun. Scrolls, wrapped up on dowels, are also fun to make. A visit to watch a printing press is fascinating. And children can make their own books, using stories or poems they have dictated, which can be sewn up on a sewing machine, right in the classroom.

There are hundreds of worthwhile books and poems for children and no teacher should settle for a piece of inferior writing of any sort. The small books often sold in supermarkets may look appealing but are generally poorly written and not worth their meager prices. The eventual goal of teaching enjoyment of books is fostering enjoyment of literary excellence and a reverence for fine language usage. The child who is exposed to and enjoys good stuff early will be more apt to ignore the shoddy later on.

Poetry is an especially appealing read-aloud item for children and any library offers anthologies for children, from which the teacher may choose poetry she likes. However, there are lovely poems written for adults which children can and do enjoy and which will add to their enjoyment of using language. It is simply a matter of experimenting. Robert Frost, Rachel Lindsay, Emily Dickinson, Sara Teasdale, Christina Rossetti, Langston Hughes are poets whose shorted works appeal to children. Consider this cinquain, by Adelaide Crapesy:

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"Listen,
With faint, dry sounds
Like steps of passing ghosts,
The leaves, frost-crisp'd,
Break from the trees, and fall."

Audience awareness is all important. If the poem bombs, if the story bogs down, put them away for another time. Perhaps read-aloud time needs to be done at a different time during the day. Perhaps the books being read are too long for the average attention span of the group. The one criterion is an absorbed audience. There should be times for telling a story with finesse. Puppets or marionettes make good story tellers. Whatever the method, the point is to provide a pleasurable experience for children. A good reading-aloud session should be planned every day.

VISUAL DISCRIMINATION

The child moves from gross to fine discrimination and teaching colors and shapes is a good place to begin. During the Three and Four years, nearly all children learn to identify the six primary colors and the more common shapes, such as the circle, triangle, square, and later, the diamond and rectangle.

A flannel board, inexpensively made, is an invaluable tool for teaching color and shape concepts. Children enjoy handling the figures for the board and these need not be elaborate either. Teachers can use coloring books, which are easily obtained which have large pictures and these can be traced onto scraps of felt. Colorforms, with their slippery pieces, are also helpful in this context. Parquetry blocks and regular building blocks are another teaching tool.

There can be three approaches to teaching shapes and colors. The teacher may begin by simply identifying. "This is red." "This is blue." Next, the child is asked to indicate the circle, the red shirt, the green book. In this instance the teacher may find children who can see the visual differences although they may not yet be able to identify them, verbally, on their own. The child who has mastered these fundamental discriminations can be asked to

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respond verbally. "What color is the circl ?" The answer, given confidently, will be, "It's red."

Some activities, games and songs will be of special interest in the process of teaching colors and shapes.

- Picture Discussion. Show pictures to the children. Coloring books have lots of simple, large pictures which can be colored in. What color is the chicken? The tree? And so on.

- Peg Board. Teacher places one color of pegs - two or three together - and asks the child to make a similarly colored grouping.

- Colored Marbles or Buttons. Several items of one color are placed in a box or paper cup and one item of another color added. The child is asked to find the item which is different.

- Colored Balls. Children identify colored balls by color and talk about their other properties: roundness, smoothness, etc. Be careful to make a distinction here between a circle and a sphere!

- Play Tiles. Use paper cups or other small containers. Have children sort tiles according to color.

- Rug Colors. Children with red rugs may lie here, may get up now and so on.

- Articles of clothing. All those wearing blue may get their coats. Or wash hands.

- The Train. Cut out train cars from various primary colored paper. Line up these cars on the floor. Give children parquetry blocks for tickets. Those with red tickets put them on the red car. This can be used as a transitional activity before snack time, and so forth.

- Giant Dominoes. Using colors only, rather than number of dots, the adult can help children to make patterns with dominoes.

- Colored Lollipops. Glue round colored shapes onto

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popsickle sticks. Children may talk about the color of their lollipops.

- "Mary Wore a Red Dress" is a fun song to use in this context.

- Squares of indoor-outdoor carpeting make excellent individual flannel boards. Initially, use only 1 shape. Later, add different sizes of the single color. Compare and rank sizes.

- Fingerpainting. When fingerpainting, children can choose the color they wish added to the liquid starch. Those who ask for green receive blue and yellow tempera and mix their own. It's probably a good idea to have only the three primary colors of tempers on hand, so that the process of mixing can be observed whenever the child is using paint.

- Dixie Cup. Dixie cups of different colors are placed upside down on a table. While children hide their eyes, the teacher hides a penny or a button under one cup. The child must ask, "Is it under the red cup?" He continues to ask until he finds the missing object. It is then his turn to hide the object for the next child.

- Color Day. Let the group choose a color for the next day and have as many activities as possible using the chosen color. Paint, paper, clay, juice, cups might all be red. At circle, discuss variations of the color chosen.

- Lost Child. Children sit in a circle. Teacher describes what one child is wearing and the children guess who it is being describes.

- Room Items. Have children tell all items in room that they can see which are red, blue, and so on.

- Bean Bag Toss. Paint six large coffee cans in primary colors. Attach them to a board. Children all out a color and toss a bean bag at that can.

- Leaves. Children cut out simple leaf shapes from primary colors. Teacher holds up a sheet of colored paper and says, "Pretty little leaf, hanging on a tree. If yours is the same, you may come to me."

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- Color Circle Matching. Use a shoe box with a slot. Cut out circles of various colors, one set for the leader, another for the player. The leader pulls a circle from his group and the child who matches this color names the color. Both then put their circles into the box. The first person to match and discard his circles is the winner and becomes the leader for the next game. This could also be done with squares or triangles and later, with a combination of different shapes and colors, making the process of discrimination more difficult.

- Lollipop Game. Children sit in circle, holding lollipops. A color is called out and children with like colors exchange places.

- Musical Papers. Tape different colored construction papers onto floor. Children move from paper to paper until the music stops, at which time, the child on the red paper is out. (Assuming the group is ready for abiding by rules of a game, this particular game could be varied using shapes.)

- Fishing Pole With Magnet. Colored fish, with paper clips attached, are cut out. Fishing pole has magnet on the end of line. Child calls out color he will fish for and may keep his catch.

- Rainbow. Children can cut large arcs of varying shades of colored paper. These are put together to form a rainbow pattern. This project might follow experimentation with a prism.

- Walking Around a Shape. A large drawing of a circle, square or triangle on the floor may be walked around by a child.

- Large drawings of shapes on a chalkboard may be traced around by a child having problems with identification.

- The Flannel Board may be used with a group. Each child has a turn before going to the snack table. Teacher will vary her request according to the level of each child. John, a young Four might be asked to put two red circles on the board. Julie, a mature, older Four, might be asked to put a red circle and two green squares in the center of the

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flannel board. In every case, the teacher compliments the child on his performance and tries to give him a task to which he is equal.

- Distribute six counting sticks to each child and ask him to make a particular shape with his sticks.

Puzzles. Puzzles are a part of every preschool's equipment but are often neglected as a teaching tool. There should be a large enough selection of puzzles so that the least mature child can find one he can work and the most mature child can also be challenged. Puzzles which are too difficult only serve to frustrate a child and give the helping mother a change to do puzzles all by herself. It is far better to help a child by simply holding up a piece and letting him use his eyes to determine whether it will fit than it is to put the piece in for him.

What Is Missing? This activity can be done in a wide variety of ways. Have children in a circle close their eyes and in the interim, have two children change places. Then the rest of the group tries to remember who was where.

- Using simple pictures (often teacher drawings on chalkboard are acceptable) with something missing: a face without an eye, a wagon without a wheel.

- What child isn't at school today?

- Grocery shopping. Use empty grocery boxes on a shelf. Paste a collage of similar pictures. Have child study this for a short time and then go shopping without collage.

COMPARATIVE SIZES

Here, again, the words used to describe comparative sizes (and weights and other properties) mean little or nothing to a child until he has experienced the sensory evaluation. Most of these comparative concepts are quickly learned: the adult role is merely to focus the child's attention on the differences. Gross differences are the first distinc ions to be made. Later, the child is able to arrange a series of objects in a progression from smaller to larger.

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- Flannel Board. For Threes, one large circle and one much smaller circle. The child indicates which is larger or which is smaller. Squares, triangles, leaves, cars: my item can be used in this regard.

- In pictures. Point to the largest elephant, the middle-sized elephant.

- On field trips. The ride to and from places of interest provides opportunities for teaching. "Show me the biggest house you see." "Look at the tiny dog that woman is carrying." "Do you see a flower growing in the window box over there?"

- Animals are different sizes. In this picture, the dog looks very big. If you saw the dog at the zoo, would he be bigger or smaller than the elephant? (Assuming, of course, that the child has been to the zoo and has actually seen an elephant.)

- Riddles. Which is bigger, a spider or a butterfly? Starting with grosser comparisons (spider and dog, for instance) and moving to less easily made comparisons.

- Giving directions. The large blocks go on the bottom shelf. The little books are on the top of the stack.

- Chalkboard. Draw shapes on the chalkboard. Child is asked to erase the smallest circle, the largest tree, etc.

- Collecting leaves. Which of the child's leaves is the biggest? The smallest?

- Magnifying glass. Things look bigger through a magnifying lens and it's fun also to have a reducing lens with which children can experiment.

- Outlines. Have child lie on large sheet of paper and draw around him, adding afterwards a suggestion of facial features, and the outline of articles of clothing. Some children will want to spend a lot of time coloring in the outline. Others will just enjoy having the unadorned replica of themselves.

- Physical movements. Big steps, little steps. Big

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jumps, little jumps.

- Concentric circles. These are easily made from cardboard paper or felt. The child is asked to stack them, with the largest circle on the bottom.

- Pyramid cones. A baby's pyramid stacking toy can be very useful in the nursery school classroom. Fours should be able to arrange the pyramid in either direction with a minimum of difficulty.

- Graded [illegible]ies. These are made from felt or cardboard, in any shape, [illegible]nd the child is asked to arrange them from small to large, or vice versa, in a row. Fours can arrange a series of 6-8 items with very little difficulty.

- Drawing. Give each child a piece of newsprint and a cra[illegible]on. Help him to fold the paper in half. Ask him to draw a large circle on one side of the paper and a small circle on the other half. Some Fours will have difficulty closing the circle.

VISUAL MEMORY

- Peek box. Box containing a variety of small objects is presented for child's study. The box is taken away and the child tries to remember as many items as he can.

- Using parquetry blocks, draw two or four block patterns, and ask the child to lay matching-sized blocks over this pattern. (This can be increased in difficulty by requiring a color match as well as a size and shape match.)

- Lay nails in a simple pattern and ask child to duplicate this pattern.

- String beads: two reds and two blues. Have the child duplicate this design. This, too, can be increased in difficulty as the child matures.

- Snap together blocks. Teacher arranges three in a simple patterns and then asks the child to duplicate her pattern.

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- The teacher may make design cards of buttons, beads, seeds, matches, nails, plastic toothpicks, etc. These can be glued to cards. The child is presented with a card and asked to make a card like it.

- Colored plastic clip-on clothespins can be used to clip onto coffee cans. The child is asked to make his can look like the model.

- Flannel board. Using flannel board figures, produce a simple scene and ask the child to reproduce the same scene.

- Slide projector. Present a block design on the slide projector and ask the entire class to reproduce it.

- Use clay. Make three big balls and one small ball then ask the children to do as you did.

- Block designs. As the child develops, he should be able to copy a block design by putting his pattern together without using the design underneath. Prop the card to one side for easy reference.

- Copy five designs by stringing beads on laces, attached to cards. Later, children should be able to reproduce pattern from memory, having mastered the basic pattern element.

- Block designs are copied from miniature examples.

- Give each child a circle, triangle and a square. Prepare a series of designs on a 12" x 18" tag board. Hold up a design. Then turn it down and let the children try to arrange their shapes in the same design.

In all of these activities, it is necessary for the teacher to be aware of each child's level. Mothers in the classroom can then work with certain children individually making certain that a more difficult task is not assigned until the less difficult task is completely mastered.

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FIGURE GROUND ACTIVITIES

- Have children make a collage then have one child describe what he sees in another child's creation.

- Make reproductions of geometric shapes with missing lines. Have children try to complete the shapes.

- Draw a simple figure - perhaps a cat. Then shade or draw lines over the cat. The child should outline the cat with his finger or, if appropriate, with a pencil or crayon.

- Take a trip to the grocery to buy food. Have the child pick a particular food from the shelf. Be sure you have preparation for this, prior to the trip!

- When cooking, have a collection of mixed cooking utensils. Ask the child to pick out a particular utensil from among those in the group.

- Prepare a picture with overlapping designs. Ask the child to trace each separate design with his finger.

- Using a variety of different objects (buttons, clips, pins, and so on) and ask the child to sort objects into different groups.

- Photographs. Ask the child to trace around various items in the photograph - foreground and background.

- Tracing. Very mature Fours and Fives can trace 2 and 3 dimensional forms with fingers. They can also use simple stencils.

- Form differentiation. Ask children to point out the square, or the circular objects in the room.

- Hidden pictures. Make or use those already printed pictures hidden within a larger picture.

HAND-EYE COORDINATION

- Bat ball from large tee to target.

- Throw ball to moving target. (Teacher moves with

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large triangle.

- Throw beanbags at target on a shade. Pull down to use.

- Hit balloon with paddle. The adult manipulates the balloon, changing its distance and height from the child.

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Pre-Mathematical Concepts

- Words which children need to understand in this context are predominantly spatial designations.

Down and up	Around	Between
Beside	Before, after	On, off
In a row, in a line	On top, underneath	Inside, outside
Behind, in front, in back	Above, beneath, below	Over, under
Side, the other side	Forward, back	Top, middle, bottom

Giving directions, either for real or as an exercise will enable the teacher to measure the child's understanding. Using flannel board, blocks, pegs, and pegboard, the teacher can ask a child to place an item.

- Most preschoolers learn to count by rote and can readily identify up to three sets of objects before they can understand sequential relationships such as first, second, third. Try lining up three children and have them race (on hands and knees, hopping, or such) to a certain point in the room. Who is first? Second? Third? First? Middle? Last? Felt race cars for the flannel board or the cars of a train set can also be used.

- Conservation. Are five raisins spread out in a long line more desirable than five raisins bunched together? Is there more clay when a ball is pressed flat or when it is left in a ball? Many mature Fours will thoroughly enjoy these kinds of challenges in the area of conservation.

- Like and different. Collect as many used postal stamps of different varieties as possible. Distribute stamps

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and make sure each child has two or three stamps. Have children match the stamps with one another.

- Read the poem "Little" by Dorothy Aidis. Discuss smaller members of the family.

- Read "My Bed" by Elizabeth Manson Scott to help reinforce big and little relationships.

- Cut out a felt strip about 1" x 4". Place this strip on a flannel board. Have the child place a similar strip next to the first one, then two strips which, when put together, equal the size of the first one.

- Play game "I'm Very, Very Tall". Verse is as follows"

I'm very tall,
I'm very, very small.
Sometimes tall,
Sometimes small,
Guess what I am now.

Use a circle with blindfolded player in the center. He must guess whether the group ended with being tall or small.

- Ask a tall and a short child to stand side by side and compare sizes. Teacher stands beside these children: now who is tallest?

NUMERICAL CONCEPTS

1. Is able to count in a rote fashion to 10
   a. Let child count ingredients during cooking time.
   b. Count out napkins, juice, crackers, cups, etc., at juice time.
   c. Take them to a store and choose ten 1¢ items.

2. Use music to introduce songs like "This Old Man" and "Ten Little Indians".

3. Ask children to account for specific number of items brought into room at beginning of day at the end of the play period... e.g., "I brought ten books this morning. Are they all here now?"

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4. Counting rhymes such as "intry, mintry, cutry corn" or "One, two, buckle my shoe". Songs such as "One, two, a ghost says boo", or "Ten In a Bed".

5. Table games such as Lotto and counting items on a table or in a box.

6. Using gross muscle actions such as having some children jump 10 times while others count for them, or counting bounces of ball or balloon.

7. Ask children to count or count with them while we put away blocks, crayons, brushes, etc.

8. Use the book you are reading to the children to encourage them to take part by counting the number of items in an illustration.

9. Count heads at juice time or circle time.

10. Fingerplays:
    a. 5 little pumpkins sitting on a gate, etc. -- October
    b. 5 little snowmen starting to play
       The first one said, "Isn't it a lovely day?"
       2nd "We'll never have tears"
       3rd "We'll last for years"
       4th "What will happen in May?"
       5th "Look, we're melting away."
    c. 5 little bells hanging in a row, etc. ----- Christmas month.

11. Give numerical directions. e.g., "Cut out three pictures from this magazine."

12. Use flannel board to let child count figures. Or put up three figures, then let child pick out correct number from a box. (Individually or small groups only)

13. Relate numbers to events: Child tell about 3 nighttime events and 3 daytime events.

14. Pick three children to wash hands.

15. Count and tap heads. "1, 2, 3, all the threes can go to the table."

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16. Repetition: Count felt pieces, blocks, pegs, crayons, buttons. Anything until the one-to-one relationship is established.

17. General Store -- play trading game with small group. e.g., Give me one block for these three buttons.

18. Question children about how many, how much. e.g.:
We have ___ children and how many chairs do we need?
We have ___ cans of paint, how many brushes do we need?
We have 4 (Use only small group) people sitting in a circle, how many feet are in the ring?

19. Do school room chores in sets of threes. e.g., Feed the gerills three seeds, drop 3 letters in the post office box.

20. Use numerical concepts to relate classroom safety rules. e.g., We allow 3 people at the workbench.
Only three people can safely use the roof of the climber.

21. Use creative arts activities to talk about numbers. Let's make pictures telling about the number three. Make three balls, make three triangles, make three trees.

22. Teacher and group sing the "Sesame Street" counting song. Use any other TV personality or show that the children are exposed to.

23. Act out and sing or tell the story-rhyme of "Three Little Kittens", "Three Little Pigs", "Three Bears".

24. Pokey Little Puppy is good Golden Book for elementary subtraction ... (one puppy is always far behind) and for 1 through 5.

25. Make cloverleaf rolls from roll mix. Each takes three pieces rolled into 3 balls, then place in a muffin pan.

26. When making butter, ask each child to shake the jar 10 times.

27. Use magnet and paper clips. How many clips did the magnet pick up?

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Time

- Calendars, clocks, the marking of birthdays, the months, the days of the week, the seasons and holidays of the year are all part of the increasing vocabulary of a pre-schooler.

- Charlotte Zolotow's "Over and Over Again" is a good book to read aloud. Children are fascinated by the fact that holiday follows holiday in an orderly progression. Familiar with this book, they will often ask, "What comes next?" when one holiday is just concluded.

- Misterogers' song "Seven Days" is also a favorite. The constant repetition of "Today is Monday" or "Tomorrow is Tuesday and we don't come to school" serves to establish a time pattern in children's minds.

- Other time words include: morning, afternoon, evening, weekend, yesterday, tomorrow, today. Often children use these words without completely understanding them. Crossing off days on a calendar sometimes helps.

- Actual experience of small time units is the best way of beginning to teach time concepts. "In five minutes, it will be cleanup time," "We will be at the fire station for about 30 minutes." "We go home in an hour."

- Use a kitchen timer. "In 5 minutes, when the buzzer sounds, we're going to trade bikes." You may ride the horse till the buzzer sounds. Then it's Mike's turn."

Numbers

- The child must feel and see two objects before he understands the concept of two. Therefore, he needs much practice in handling and counting two objects before he is ready to move on to the idea of three.

- Game. Teacher recites the verse for individual children, putting up the number of fingers that child can now distinguish. At first, children will need to count her fingers to answer. Later, merely looking will provide the answer.

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"Clap your hands,
One, two, three,
How many fingers
Do you see?"

- Count, count, COUNT. Napkins, beads, buttons, pegs, toes, fingers, children!

Science Vocabulary

- Words which children can understand at a preschool level include change, hot, cold, melt, freeze, solid, liquid, wet, dry, born, die, and, indeed, many other terms which fit experiences provided in the classroom - experiences in which the child participates in a sensory way.

- Put three bowls on the science table, one containing ice, one containing warm water, one containing hot water. Let children stick a thermometer (preferably an ungraded thermometer) into these bowls and watch the mercury go up and down. Most Fours can make correct scientific assumptions after this simple experimenting: the mercury goes up for hot things, and down for cold things. At this time, some children with high intelligence are capable of discussing "expand" and "contract".

- Measuring things with rulers, with yard sticks, with an oven timer, with a scale (balance) are all activities which increase a child's understanding of mathematical concepts.

- Caramel apples. The change from nearly solid caramels to a hot, liquid state can be pointed out. The change of jello as a powder to a liquid, then a solid, is very exciting.

- Dipping leaves in melted parafin is fun, particularly when the children can examine the hard chunks of parafin before it is heated and changed into a liquid.

- Ice cubes can be placed in a pan and their change into water can be observed. Eventually, in all these experiments, some simple scientific assumptions can be made, as to the properties of solids and liquids. Children are capable of considerably more insight than most adults realize.

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Fun With Words

Simple games using words can expand a child's vocabulary.

- The child uses two or more words to name the animals in pictures of dogs, cats, rabbits, horses. Example: dog, pooch, hound, mutt, poodle, puppy.

- Silly words. What do you think a puddle jumper is? A chow hound? A bird walk? Children often have erroneous ideas of idiomatic expressions or words. Expressions adults use confuse and sometimes frighten them only because they do not understand.

- Opposites. What is the opposite of full? (Use Dixie cup full of beads and empty it out.) Once the concept has been learned, via actual experience, most mature Fours will enjoy making their own riddles. Hot and cold, up and down, little and big, fast and slow, old and young are good sets to try.

- Rhyming words. Although this is predominantly a listening experience, the sounds of rhymes can often be pointed out to (or will be noticed by) children during story time.

Grownups' Vocabulary

When giving directions to small children, it is, of course, necessary to be terse and specific. Explanations are best done in brief, explicit, concrete terms. However, in general conversation, many adults tend to talk down to children and this is to be avoided. Children learn words in context and will use the words they learn, often quite complicated words, in proper context. "Scarlet," "crimson" and "magenta" are all ways of saying "red" and enrich one's vocabulary, as well as make language discriminating. The more children hear good conversation, the more they will reproduce it in their own language.

EXPERIENCES

The idea of change is all around children. They are interested in their own growth, in the birth of a sibling,

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in the death of a grandparent, in a parent's illness. It is the teacher's job to help each child make sense out of his environment. She does this by providing him, or by helping him to develop, a series of concepts, of generalizations. Later information can be integrated into this framework.

In general, there are several areas with which a child's experiences to date have acquainted him.

- Living and dying. Living creatures are born, grow up to a certain point and no more, and eventually die. Usually they die because their bodies grow old and do not function well or they die because they meet with an accident. Bodies are remarkable commodities, able to withstand illness, but need proper care. Some of the properties of animals are, besides being born and growing up, the ability to eat, to have young, to move around. Human beings have a remarkable facility called remembering, which distinguishes them from other animals. Many children are fascinated by dinosaurs around five and all children enjoy observing gerbils, hamsters, and the other animals commonly on hand in the classroom.

- Change. It is possible for matter to change and yet not disappear. Ice cubes melted on a hot plate become water and the water eventually becomes steam and goes into the air. Children enjoy this experiment and speculate endless about where the water went. Eventually, they will agree that it went into the air. The dead bird which was found on the playground and buried will change into part of the earth. (It may need to be dug up periodically to establish this fact.)

- Simple machines. Occasionally, a group of boy Fours will be fascinated by an investigation of simple machines and most children love having a pulley, a ramp, and wheels to work with at the science table.

- Emotions. All human beings have strong feelings. We all have fears, we all love and often, hate one another. The important concept here is that as we grow up, we try very hard to control ourselves so that we never hurt anyone else as a result of these strong feelings. Adults make just as many mistakes as anyone else. Everyone has trouble fol-

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lowing rules all of the time. There are many good books which bring out these concepts.

- Children enjoy bringing their baby pictures to school and these may be posted beside a picture of the child as he is now. New shoes, a bigger coat are occasions of rejoicing. It is important that the teacher notice these events so important to a child.

- Field trips, even simple ones to a nearby park, are useful as concept builders. The trees are turning green, there are nuts on the ground, the sky is full of clouds now, instead of clear blue as it was. Children will notice these things and if they do not, it is the teacher's job to call changes to their attention.

LABELS

Children read by many methods and, at three and four, can learn to identify by pictures. A certain small picture makes Joe's coat hook identifiable. Lines on the block shelves direct children in placing blocks. Pictures on drawers tell where to stow crayons and scissors.

NAMES

Many children, by the end of the Four year, will be able to write their own first names and some, their entire names. Kindergarten teachers will teach a child to use upper and lower case letters and so it seems wise to use this method in nursery school.

Before a child writes his name, he needs to see it in many places: on his painting (upper left hand corner, please). on his Valentine sack, on his boots. At some point, he will ask to be shown how to write his name.

Most children will work diligently to master this skill, even those with names like Georganna and Sarahlouise. However, if the child shows poor coordination and is terribly frustrated, it often helps to put a little sand into a suit box, wet the sand thoroughly, and have the child write with a small stick, or his fingertip, in the sand.

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LETTERS

Despite the controversy raging over when to begin teaching children to read, some children will, before five, teach themselves to read, entirely without adult assistance. Many other children of high intelligence will be enormously interested in letters, in what signs say, in how things are spelled, well before the end of their nursery school experience. What do we do with these children? Surely, they should have their opportunities to grow and develop, at a more rapid rate than the average.

In general, young children who teach themselves to read do so by a phonetic process. Thus, when helping a bright child who is curious about and interested in letters and reading, it seems reasonable to use a sort of phonetic approach.

It is reasonable, to a bright child, that letters are pictures of sounds, in the same way that a picture of a house is not the house itself, but a representation of a physical thing. The consonants, with some exceptions, are pictures of distinct sounds and if they are taught, should be identified with these sounds. Vowels are probably best taught as faulty pictures, and the short sounds are probably the best sounds to teach in the beginning.

In sum, it is the pressure engendered in the teaching of reading which causes damage to a child. If a Four can easily learn the sounds of a short A and the sounds of B and T and put together the word BAT with no strain, he is ready for the process and does not need to be pushed or pressured. There is little point in spending a lot of time to teach a preschooler to read, since most young children will learn more quickly in a year or so; it is important to take the child who reads in stride and not let his accomplishments obscure the many other growing pains which he undoubtedly has. The preschool classroom should be wide enough in scope to accept all children, from the one who still has difficulty telling red from blue, to the one who cannot be diverted from covering the chalkboard with words he is discovering how to write.

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BEFORE WRITING

Elementary school children are required to do an inordinate amount of writing. They begin with what is called "printing". (though it is actually lettering) and progress laters, and often painfully, to cursive writing. Although Penmanship is not the revered subject it once was, children today still need considerable skill, coordination and perserverance to handle the pencil-to-paper requirements expected of them in an elementary classroom.

Piaget tells us that the nursery school child is moving out of the sensor-motor period into the pre-operational period. He is still becoming aware of what senses are operating. He is using his senses to learn about his environment. He is finding out about space: where he is in relationship to objects and people, where objects are in relationship to one another. He learns most when his whole body is involved in the process. He needs to learn to use his large muscles well before the fine muscles, slower to develop, can meet the demands on them. From three months, when a baby sees, reaches for, and can grasp the birds handing above his crib to six years, when the first grader clumsily writes numerals on a math worksheet represents a gigantic leap in physical and intellectual development. A good nursery school can help the child in this struggle towards mastery of his body.

Touching, smelling, tasting a variety of objects maximizes the perceptual input. Body awareness can be expanded in many ways. Laterality and balance, introduction to the left-right sequence, increased motor perception and an ability to handle simple physical tasks are all ingredients in the process which culminates in the first story the child writes down, all by himself.

PHYSICAL SUFFICIENCY

The young Three comes to nursery school, barely toilet trained, often totally dependent on adults to wash his hands, put on his coat and open doors for him. Encouragement and practice usually produce a mature Four who can open his own doors, snap his own pants, put on his own shoes, coat and hat, and often buttons and zips, to say nothing of that talented youngster, much in demand at the end of the day,

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who knows how to tie. A mature Four can pump himself in a swing, ride a tricycle (and sometimes a bicycle), hang by his heels from the jungle gym and climb a ladder with alternating feet. Skipping and jumping rope are not expected of a Four, but some do it anyhow. A young Three can stumble and fall over a toothpick. He may bump into tables and walls when dancing. But the swagger and self-confidence of a Four are legendary. His prowess is amazing, considering the clumsy creature from which he so recently has evolved. Children who feel comfortable in the nursery school room are relaxed physically. They fingerpaint with abandon. They hammer, saw, push trucks around the floor, dance to nearly any kind of music, gesture and romp. Learning proceeds most effectively when the child is relaxed and secure. The experienced teacher can gauge the degree to which a child is at home in his environment by the freedom of his physical movements.

BODY AWARENESS

The young child begins by being aware of his body as a whole and as his comprehension and vocabulary develop, becomes conscious of the various parts of the whole and what he can do with them.

- Threes and Fours like to learn new names for identifying body parts. The teacher may make a silly game of this, using a doll or teddy bear. "Show me the elbow." "Show me the chin." "Show me the eyebrow." Hip, waist, shoulder, palm, ankle, wrist, ear lobe are some of the many terms which most young children are not clear about.

- Play a nonsense game with them in which statements like "Do feet taste?" "Do toes hear?" are asked. The children can then make up their own questions.

- Fingerplays and Songs. "Thumbkin" is good. "Put Your Finger in the Air" is another. "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toe" can be varied enormously, using terms children are learning.

- Some children will be interested in seeing a skeleton, or plastic models of ears, tongues, and so on. A few children feel threatened by this sort of thing.

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- An individual child performs some action and the other children tell what the child did. "Crawling like a snake" and "Hopping like a rabbit." This needs some preparation: it's hard to crawl like a snake if one has never seen one crawl.

- Put together puppet. This is an assembly job by the child. The pieces already have holes punched (a mighty preparation job by the teacher) but if there is a variety of legs and arms and bodies to be put together, the children enjoy the project more. Use paper fasteners, add clothes, features as child wishes.

- Some children like to play with paper dolls and there are some sets which a Four can punch out by himself. These can be played with as the children wish or can be mounted in appropriate groups to represent a child's family.

- A large paper puppet can be posed by the teacher, with the children copying the position.

- Felt pieces, on the flannel board, can be used to put together a body. There are colorforms for this purpose and there is a plastic snap-together set called "Pop-its" with which all kinds of people and animals can be made.

- Riddles. The object here is for the child to describe AND show the action. "How does a record player go?" A Ferris wheel, a teeter-totter, water over a waterfall, and so on. The child is being asked to translate an idea verbally and physically.

- Have the children roll up and pretend they are circles, stretch out and pretend to be lines, sit up, touch toes and be triangles. Two children can form a square or a rectangle.

- Sack puppets. Using the folded over section of the bottom, with the mouth and chin on the part of the sack just below the folded-over portion, children in the Fours can draw simple faces, perhaps trim with yarn for hair, and by moving the bottom portion, make the puppet seem to talk.

- Paper mache. Very small children can dip short strips of newspaper into paste and cover a small, round bal-

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loon. When these dry, the balloon is burst (if it hasn't already) and the resulting form can be painted orange, to resemble a pumpkin. Children need considerable maturity to make a face which looks like a face, especially on an uneven surface. The best results are obtained by turning them loose with felt pens, or if jack o' lantern faces seem vital, the adult makes them.

- Ping pong balls, covered with paper mache and secured on a pencil can be made into ginger puppets. This might require a great deal of adult help.

- Felt pens are beloved by children, probably because of the thickness of the pen itself and the satisfactorily thick and smooth color line. There are no problems with smearing or running either. Never be without these in the classroom!

- Tear and pasting paper is also a good craft activity. Even the most casual execution produces lovely results.

- Simple paper doll shapes, precut by the teacher, may be "dressed" by Fours, using glue and small scraps of material.

- Sponge paint is a good activity, requiring coordination, a maximum of wetness, color, squeezing and blotting which children enjoy. Potato printing or printing with odd objects (anything which can be dipped into a small cup of paint) is equally popular. The child who is developing good hand - to - eye coordination will be able to produce some beautiful patterns.

- Pictures made from glue and seeds, beans, macaroni and other small objects require coordination of fine muscles and many children like the challenge of picking up something small, dipping it in glue, and putting it in a certain place.

- Don't forget the big primary crayons.

SMELLING

Young children have fewer preconceived notions about smells than adults do. They like to discuss how things smell and try to describe them. One small child said that

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her grandma smelled "dewy", another that straw smelled like her baby at home.

- Use baby food jars, with foil inside so child cannot see. Then put things into jar and have children try to guess what's inside: soap, toothpaste, cinnamon, peanut butter, lemon juice, vanilla, and so on.

- When cutting a pineapple, a cocoanut, using paraffin, wood, call children's attention to their distinctive smells.

- Visit Glendale for a "Smell Walk." The florists, the dime store (near it's candy counter), the fabric shops, the perfume counters, the Hotma place all have outstanding smells.

- A walk in the neighborhood will produce a number of different smells: paint, tar, oil, grass clippings, leaves burning and so on.

- Pictures remind children of familiar smells. A doctor's office, a gasoline station, a restaurant.

LATERALITY AND BALANCE

- A balance beam is a useful piece of equipment to have on hand. Children try first to walk across forward, putting one foot ahead of the other, and then when this is mastered, to walk backwards.

- Walk bare foot, with eyes closed, on a line, or on string or rope or rug strip or sand paper taped to floor.

TASTING

- Cut and taste pineapple, cocoanut, baking chocolate, salt, soda, lemon, sugar.

- Tasting party. Foods contrasting in taste but in same category. (Like cinnamon candies and marshmallows.) Child closes eyes, teacher drops candy on his tongue. How does it taste? Then some of the marshmallow and how it tastes. How is it different? Variations: Sweet - sour (grapes-gooseberry), mild-sharp (Swiss cheese, sharp cheddar, pickles - cucumbers.) also large - small, rough-smooth, wet-dry.

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- Icing orgy. Give each child his own small container of icing and a small stick to stir, let him ice several large cookies, experimenting with drops of different flavorings. The icing is the quick mix variety.

- If the mothers provide the juice daily, there are always comments about which juice tastes best. Encourage children to amplify their comments: is this better because it's sweeter? Because it's not so sweet? And so on.

- Encourage children to taste new things: the buttermilk left from making butter, the cocoanut milk, popcorn, pumpkin, a bit of squash, a piece of green pepper. A trip to the City Market will introduce many children to fruits and vegetables they have never seen before.

- Make vegetable soup, pudding, applesauce, jello, cookies, apple turkeys or other animals (toothpicks and plenty of gumdrops being the other ingredients.)

LEFT-RIGHT REQUENCE

By the end of the Four year, children should show a growing awareness of left and right. Games like "Looby Loo" or the "Hokey Pokey" are fun to play and help to teach the concept, if each child's right hand is marked with a piece of chalk beforehand.

- Give directions using these terms. "Put the long blocks on the right side of the shelf." This amounts to learning by trial and error, but if the long blocks always go in that particular place, the child begins to associate that place with the right hand side.

- Sometimes it helps to ask children to close their eyes and pretend to pick up a crayon. Excepting lefthanders, the right hand will be the hand they write with and the two words will be associated.

- Practice on chalkboard or flannel board. "Show me the circle on the right side." "Erase the circle on the left side."

- Simon Says. Mature Fours enjoy this game and the right-left terms can be included.

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- Names should be written on children's papers beginning at the far left edge of a paper. Also, when children begin to write their names, have them start on the far left side. Thus they must move from left to right, precluding mirror writing.

MOTOR PERCEPTION

These activities involve the child's whole body, in a free and creative way: a sort of total body language.

- Teach children to read body language. "When I frown and shake my finger like this, how am I feeling?" "Do my hands show love when I go like this (clench fist) or when I go like this (caress)?

- Tell children to close their eyes and show how it would feel: if you were a leaf and someone stepped on you - if you were a balloon and someone blew you up - if you were a tree and someone cut you down.

- Children enjoy watching themselves in a full length mirror and can take turns dancing or posing.

- Make up new verses to "Mulberry Bush". Children will have dozens of ideas.

- Use pictures of stick figures for morning "exercises" Hold up each card, or draw them on the chalkboard and have the children copy the position.

- Feather Game. Seated in a circle, children chant (use an Indian song or make up their own chant) and use their drums. A feather is stuck into a thread spool in the middle of the circle. One child dances around the feather until the chanting stops, then with his hands behind his back, leans forward and picks up the feather in his teeth. Another child is chosen, a little bit of feather is snipped off and the game continues until the feather disappears. (The Indian Museum has an Indian headdress for the feather dancer to wear.)

- Copy cat games. Throw a ball. Hit a ball with hand. Kick a ball. Serpentine around plastic bottles filled with

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rocks or sand. Skip, jump or hop. Climb - on ladders, rope ladders, knotted rope. Balance on sand bags of different shapes. Use hoops: inside, outside, over your body.

- Practice the feel of force and balance. Big boxes, boards, barrels, tires to crawl in, cover up with, stack, arrange. Jump from box into "water" and pretend to swim. Adult holding long pole spins child around. Two children on each end of pole go around. Walk on a ladder laid flat on the floor or stand the ladder on its side and go in and out the window. Balance on a board and reach for something at the same time, or hand something to another. Walk on paper plates, pretending to skate or ski.

- Close eyes and point to various objects in room: the ceiling, the door, and so forth.

- Make a maze of chairs, large blocks, and so forth. Ask children to crawl through without touching.

- Following directions.

1. Stand in front of the table.
2. Stand with the windows in back of you.
3. Step into the tape circle.
4. Walk under the pole.
5. Crawl through the cardboard box.

- Jumping into shapes. Tape geometric forms onto the floor. There is a specific direction for each form: walk around the square, step into the circle, jump over the triangle and so on. Vary the directions with each child, according to his abilities.

- Rag doll. Use a rag doll and demonstrate good resting positions by letting the children hold up some part of the doll and then drop it. Do this with head, legs, arms, hands, feet. Then let a child demonstrate, using another child's body as a rag doll. A good poem here is "Rag Doll".

- Game. Instruct children to close eyes. Then ask them to jump (or hop, crawl, etc.) towards an object in the room.

- Poems. "Feet" and "Hands" by Aldis.

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- "Freeze and Defrost". Children march around room in a big circle. Teacher may use drum. At the call of "Freeze" they must stop. "Defrost" means to move again.

RHYTHMIC ACTIVITIES

- Tiptoes. Children stand on tiptoes and run forward and backwards. Use drum beat, or appropriate record.

Metronome: On a slow beat, walk. Fast, and then slow again.

- Give child a rhythm instrument and ask him to stand behind the teacher so there's no visual cue. Ask him to imitate the rhythm the teacher beats out.

- Children listen to directions as given by teacher, then follow these cues in a rhythm. Clap hands twice and slap knees twice. Or clap hands twice and pound stomach twice.

- Children are asked to imitate repetitive rhythmic movements made by teacher or another child: clicking sounds with tongue, hands bend back and forth at wrist, elbows bend in and out from body and so on.

- Slap knees, tap toes, tap heels, touch head, and many other variations can be done in patterns, to music or a drum beat.

- Cassette tapes are available: "Dance-a-story about Little Duck", "Dance-a-story about the Magic Mountain", "Dance-a-story about Balloons", "Dance-a-story about the Brave Hunter", "Motor Perception", "Music for Basic Creative Movements".

- Poem. "Puddle Jumper" by Lucille Letz.

I'm a puddle jumper, a puddle jumper,
I jump the puddles in the street.
I'm a puddle jumper, a puddle jumper,
I don't splash and get wet feet.
I'm a puddle jumper, a puddle jumper,
The best puddle jumper you'll meet.

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CREATIVE DANCING

A most delightful sight is a roomful of children, perhaps with scarves, dancing freely to music. Each is using his whole body. There is no self-consciousness. How does one arrive at this happy state?

To begin with, the teacher herself must be free from self-consciousness; it's a contagious condition. It works best to begin with music which is loud, fast and has an insiseant beat. Some of the current popular music works beautifully. Split the group in two: one watches, the other dances. If the beat is contagious enough (and the loose children should be picked for the first group), the timid souls will be drawn into the dancing before long. Jigs, hornpipes, reels are also good rhythmic pieces to try. Let the groups dance for about 5 minutes at the longest.

Dancing regularly gets children into this delightful habit. As they learn to like dancing, they will move their whole bodies, where at first most tended to sway in one place. "Swan Lake", "Romeo and Juliet" and some of the "Nutcracker" are excellent pieces to use when the children have really begun to enjoy themselves. Small scarves, pieces of crepe paper streamers, even Kleenex, are fun to wave.

MOVEMENTS FOR CREATIVE DANCING*

A. Objective: To help children become free, through music, to express themselves.

1. We are not trying to teach set steps or even to teach rhythm.

2. We are trying to help the children feel music and to express with their bodies.

B. Basic movements and feelings used in guiding the child toward his own unique way of dancing. Music suggested here has been selected from POP's FESTIVAL, by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops; available from The Reader's Digest Association, Pleasantville, New York 10570. Price: $18.82.

*Prepared by Ivey Nall, teacher of dance, and F. Lull.

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1. Clap hands (Turkish March, from "The Ruins of Athens", Beethoven)

   a. Clap must come from within. When we clap with our hands only, we do not say what we feel. (Children cound sing "When the Saints GO Marching In".)

   b. Clap without any noise. Hold hands still and feel clap; see the bounce in your fingers. Let the clap come out when you feel it.

2. Begin feeling inner movement of music. (Arkansas Traveler, Guion)

   a. Pretend to bounce a ball, first with one hand, then with the other hand, then with both hands.

   b. Pretend a ball is inside you and is bouncing you. Your feet bounce like balls, first both, then separately. ("Little Brown Jug")

3. Help stir the music inside. (Reverie, Debussy)

   a. Sitting down, feel that you are holding music in your hands. Pick it up; make it big. Spread fingers apart, still holding music.

   b. Close your eyes and let the music move your arms and hands.

   c. Let the music lift you up. Grow like a tree--from inside to your fingertips. (Try "Mood Indigo" or "Lullaby of Broadway")

4. Turns. (I Want to Hold Your Hand by Lennon-McCartney)

   a. Pretend you are a see-saw with arms outstretched. You can go up and down. You can also turn around and make people spin.

   b. A tall pole inside you turns you around. (Try "Marie")

5. Learn to relax. (Le Regiment De Sambre et Meuse by Planquette, or "Strong of Pearls")

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a. The bouncing ball moves around inside you. Pick the ball up high. The ball rolls over to one side of you rolling you over, then the other side, then front, then back.

b. Feel floppy. Let your arms fall off.

c. Make a big see-saw with arms. Then let the ball roll you around and around. Tip and turn from inside.

6. Coordinate arms. (Nocturne from Lyric Suite, by Grieg)

a. Sit tall. Pretend elastic is tied around your fingers, stretching from one hand to the other. Pull hands apart and back, slowly. One hand can go way off, but then comes back. (Loose elastic (rings) to stretch gives the concept of pulling and letting go.)

b. Pull everything with elastic. Let fingers make tunnels for music to go out. If fingers are closed up, we are stuck inside our fingers.

c. Let music move from center of your body out through your hands and arms. Let music lift you up.

d. Grow farther than fingers, from within. Grow up to sky. Reach up and pull the sky down.

7. Coordinate all movements from within. (Egyptian March, by J. Strauss)

a. Bounce on toes. Feel like balloons are under your heels and keep pushing heels up.

b. Pretend to sit on something just slightly and bounce on it.

c. Pretend a string is tied from fingers on one hand to toes of same foot. When you pull hands up, toes come up. Pull knees up until they almost bump your nose.

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d. Dance close without bumping each other. (Try "Jersey Bounce" with 6 & 7)

8. Total relaxation. (Shepherd Boy from Lyric Suite, by Grieg)

a. Have children lie down with arms outstretched overhead. Let them feel the music roll them over without bumping each other.

b. Teacher takes hold of child's hands while he is still lying down and gently swings the child from side to side.

C. Individual Instruction

1. Recognize and encourage every attempt at beginning of original dancing. Help each child develop his unique style.

2. Some children may be ready to dance along. Compliment and praise; never criticize.

3. Watch for steps that are individually theirs and encourage them.

4. Ignore movements that are not felt from within. Gradually these will disappear.

5. As the children develop their unique personal style, use more and varied music. They will begin responding to changes in music.

6. Each child will find a completely different style of creative dance which will help in his development toward a vital, confident child.

MOTOR PERCEPTION AND CREATIVE MOVEMENT

There is a need in this world for people who can see things in new relationships, come up with new ideas, be imaginative and resourceful. Creative movement allows children the opportunity to develop creative minds. Creative movement is also therapeutic. It gives children bodily ways

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to deal with deep feelings they do not understand: joyful feelings, angry feelings. It allows them to control themselves through body language.

The teacher must be an inventor, inventive source. Developing big muscles and big minds requires big movements in big space on big equipment sometimes.

1. To begin, on one morning, say to the children: "Let's all put our shoes in a circle in the middle of the floor!" When they have done this, turn the music on and say, "Listen to what the music is telling you. It wants to move your body. It will let you do what you feel like doing. "But first you must find your own space."

   Do you feel like a tiger?
   A snow flake falling?
   How does a sail boat move?
   And a motor boat?
   Can you be a machine? What kind of machine?
   Can you push the wind? Can you let it push you?
   How would you move if you were a bull?
   (Hall of the Mt. K)

2. On another day during free play time, have an activity with balloons.

   Fill one with cotton.
   Fill several with water.
   Fill several with air.

   Play with the balloons in small groups, taking the group into another room. When all have had the experiences with balloons, try pretending you are balloons.

   Can you be a balloon with water in it?
   Can you be a balloon with cotton in it?
   Can you be a balloon with air in it?

3. On another day: play with different colored balloons. At the end of the day, (after free play period) try "Dance a Story About Balloons".

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4. On another day, walk in a circle and let the drum tell you what to do. As the drum-beat gets faster, you will get faster. If the drum gets slow, what will you do? If it hops?

   Move and make noises. (Did you know it's easier for children to move when they make noises?)

5. Clap the pattern of names. Walk the pattern of names.

6. Dramatize nursery rhymes, poems, songs. When dramatizing:

   1. The story must have action;
   2. There must be changes in feelings;
   3. Only 2 or 3 characters to imitate;
   4. Characters with differing qualities make good drama.

   Lines written for Gene Kelly to dance to, by Carl Sandburg.

Selected Verses

Can you dance a question mark?
Can you dance an exclamation point!
Can you dance a couple of commas,
And bring it to a finish with a period.

Can you dance like the wind is pushing you?
Can you dance like you are pushing the wind?
Can you dance with slow wooden heels and then change to
bright and singing silver heels?
Such nice feet, such good feet.

Left foot, tweedle-dum-right foot tweedle-dee, here they go.

When Yankee Doodle came to town, wot wuz he a-ridin' on?
A buffalo? An elephant? A horse?
No, no, no, no. A pony it wuz, a pony.
That's right --
Giddi-ap, Giddi-ap, Giddi-ap, Giddi-ap.
Whoa! Whoa!

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Bubbles

Two bubbles found they had rainbows on their curves.
They flickered out saying:
"It was worth being a bubble just to have held that rainbow thirty seconds."

Fog

The fog comes on little cat feet.
It sits looking over harbor and city on silent haunches and then moves on.

TOUCHING AND FEELING

Scarcely anything in a nursery school room is sacred: The environment is created to be handled and touched. In addition to the instructional activities which emphasize feel and the art activities which involve textures, there is also the learning centered around differentiation of weight.

Teaching Tools

- Shapes, numbers and letters may be cut from sandpaper. Montessori letters are covered with sandpaper. Children who have difficulties mastering a shape of letter may trace the surface with a fingertip.

- Grab bag. Sack is filled with small, easily identifiable objects: Ball, car, pen. Child reaches in and tries to identify what he touches.

- Sort items into groups according to their textures.

- Make a texture board. Children can bring things from home and make their own.

ART ACTIVITIES

- Fingerpaint! The old standby. Try using soap flakes instead, or adding sand or glitter to vary the texture. Or fingerpaint on wallpaper - textured or flocked. Put tempera

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into cold cream.

- Use yarn on sandpaper to make pictures.

- Use both wet and dry sand in the sandbox.

- Make collages of any available and interesting bits: peas, beans, yarn, fur, cotton, steel wool, and so forth.

- Dip colored chalk in water before using. Or dip a piece of paper in water and draw on it with chalk. (Hair spray will keep it from rubbing off.)

- Dough, clay, play-dough, super stuff (made from the recipe on the cornstarch box).

- Use Q-tips, feathers, twine to paint with.

- Use plastic crystals and bake in oven. Different temperatures produce different textures.

- Styrofoam odds and ends may be glued together.

- Peanuts make good collages.

- Dip-it and twisted wires produce fascinating items.

- Thick paint, dropped over a large surface may be blown at through straws by children seated all around the table. (If it's not thick enough, look out!)

- Blot pictures are fun. Dab paint on one side of the pre-folded paper, fold press, and see what happens.

- Tracing paper over a textured surface, rubbed with the side of a crayon reproduces pictures.

- Spatter painting.

- Use tempera and large paper on a flat surface. While paint is wet, sprinkle with sale, sand, sawdust, iron filings, wood shavings, glitter, and anything else which comes to mind. Or glue may be spread on a picture and the various items sprinkled on it.

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- Sand paint. Color white sand with food coloring. The child then paints a picture with glue on his paper, with or without making an outline first. Colored sand is sprinkled over the glue.

- Take children on a nature walk to collect nuts, twigs, small pebbles, whatever is desired. The children may then discuss their items and how they look and feel. These may then be mounted on a cardboard or a paper. Mobiles can be made from these sorts of items, too, suspended from a bent coat hanger.

- Three-D items. Discuss with the children the differences between two dimensional and three dimensional figures. They may then make pictures which stand out, by folding pieces of stiff colored paper and pasting one side to the background. They can learn also to curl and twist paper strips to add variety.

AWARENESS OF WEIGHT

- Have on hand a variety of items: feathers, stones, shells, a magnet. Ask the children to hold one thing in each hand and try to distinguish which is the heavier item.

- Have two socks of the same size, and fill each with a different weight. Child then differentiates heavier or lighter.

- A simple balance scale is fun for experimentation.

- A bathroom scale interests children.

- Verbally, "Which is heavier, a feather or an apple?"
"Which is lighter, a bean or a fork?"

Scissors

Using scissors is difficult for the Three. Fours are none too handy either and should not be expected to cut very complicated figures nor to cut for any length of time. A child who is having lots of trouble can practice cutting clay. In fact, it's often fun to put the scissors out with the clay or dough and watch what children can do with the combination.

Names

- The process of learning to write names is covered on page 24.

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SPEAKING

In today's crowded world, good communication among people is crucial. Getting along constructively with others is a process which demands skill, empathy, concern for others and above all, knowing how to use words.

There are those who charge that the typically quiet public school classroom stifles children in many ways, particularly verbally. If this charge is valid, then developing speaking skills becomes doubly important in the freer atmosphere of the preschool classroom.

Talking is communicating one's self; children need to do endless chattering to adults who honestly listen. Talking is a way of making sense out of one's experiences; children who can manage words, communicate their uncertainties and their misinformation and can be guided. Talking is a skill which Threes and Fours are working to master; they need all the practice they can get.

In a good nursery school, a teacher cares only that a child is talking, and overlooks the garbled grammar, peculiar syntax and myriad mispronounciations. Many of the children have infantile speech patterns which will later correct themselves. Some children seem to stutter at this stage; if the repetitive speech patterns are ignored and the child listened to calmly, the problem will probably disappear.

This does not mean, however, that the teacher is careless about her own speech. She will be imitated and she should make a sincere effort to set a good example. Some of the most common errors to be avoided include:

does everyone have their coats, instead of does
everyone have HIS coat
lay down instead of lie down
laying down instead of lying down
heighth instead of height
dyper, dymond, instead of di-a-per and di-a-mond

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ernj instead of or-ange
cren instead of crayon
sherbert instead of sherbet

These kinds of mistakes make spelling and English grammar doubly difficult for a child later on.

Actually, most teachers tend to talk too much; they would do well to say less and listen with more care. Small children respond best to terse, specific directions, when these are needed.

"The round blocks go on top, next to the puzzles," states the situation without fuss.

"Help pick up the blocks now," is non-specific.

"Come on! This is the third time I've asked you to go over there and get busy," is not only non-specific but negative.

The friendly, quiet, even, unemotional voice, which betrays nothing, is the voice to cultivate. This voice makes positive statements, never negative ones. It can be very firm, but never raucous or insulting. In short, it leaves a child intact.

The developing of preschoolers' speech includes working with their speaking vocabularies, helping them to verbalize feelings, giving them many chances to solve problems, encouraging them to be creative with words and providing opportunities for dramatic role playing.

SPEAKING VOCABULARY

Comfortable children will chat endlessly all morning long among themselves. It is sometimes interesting to watch and listen to a particular child for an extended period. Often a highly verbal child will do all the talking and another child will say very little. The teacher needs to be aware of these children who are not getting much of a chance to talk. Perhaps they can be encouraged to play with other

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less verbal friends, to get some practice.

Sharing Time

There should be a time for the group to sit relaxed just for the purpose of discussing. The teacher who sits on the floor at this time may find it makes a difference. This is the time to talk about what might be fun to do next week, which field trip sounds best, what can be done with the sticks on the playground, how to avoid the accidents on the slide. Sometimes, they may be an old fashioned gossip session. Wasn't it a good field trip? Yes, we all miss Julie. And isn't it too bad Christmas is over? A low key type arrangement, of the coffee klatsch variety. Sitting with the children at snack time is another opportunity just to talk for the sake of talking. A child's casual remarks are often very revealing to a teacher with insight.

Craft Time

Children like to talk about their craft work and though mostly pictures are made for the sheer fun of creating, some children like to tell about pictures later, more or less making it up as it comes to them. A spotty looking painting may afterward become "bear tracks at a water hole". A tentative painting of a person may turn out well and become Grandma, because "she has a smile like that."

Games

- The teacher says, "If you were _____ (perhaps hungry, what would you say?"

- Heavy, heavy, hangs over your head. One child leaves the room while others collect objects. When child returns, then others take turns describing one of the objects which they hold over the guesser's head.

Activities

- Develop skill of "goes with" between two objects, such as hat and ___, bacon and ___, paper and ___, man and ___.

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- Use large pictures of some well-known helpers such as a doctor, dentist, fireman. Ask the children, "Who helps to take care of your teeth?" and so on. Take field trips to explore and extend these discoveries.

- Discuss what you do in the various rooms of a house. Use the doll house, if one is available. For example: "What is this room?" "Yes, it's the kitchen." "What do we do in the kitchen?"

- Show pictures of various things that answer a child's needs, such as an apple, a coat. Ask what we would do with it. Where would he find it?

- Use miniature items or pictures and ask the children to put them into groups, according to what they do for the children, such as "keeps us warm", "things to eat" and so forth.

-Take a walk in the leaves. Have the children describe the sound they make when they step on the dry leaves.

- Bring some calabash gourds to school. After the children have handled them, ask what the gourds feel like. Encourage the children to speak in full sentences, using words like "bumpy" and "knobby". Open the gourd. Ask the children what other plants look like.

- Hand out pictures. Ask "who has a picture of something you drink from?" "We move across the water on?" Or use magazines and let children find the appropriate pictures.

- Game. "I'm thinking of a word which tells something you sit on.... lie on.... climb on...."

- Have a boxful of familiar items. Let each child choose an item and then describe its use.

- From a box of assorted objects, ask various questions of children to show you which object would be used to write with, hammer with, and so forth.

- Mount simple pictures on tag board. (Coloring books have many of these.) "Show me the one we use for digging.... sewing.... washing.... climbing." Encourage answers in sentences.

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- Game. What are mittens for? What are stop signs for? Typewriters? Elevators?

- In the housekeeping corner or kitchen. "The spoon will hold water. The fork will not." "The water stays in the cup but not in the sieve." What does this do which that does not?

- Have items like brooms, dust pans, rolling pins, egg-beaters and such on hand for children to use and find out about.

- Cut pictures from catalogues, different types of the same objects. Have children group them and tell why. "These are the ones to sit in.... to sleep in.... to ride on."

- Bringing items from home. The teacher may first speak with the child and ask him to tell her about the item. As the child builds up confidence, she can say, "Tell the others about what you've brought."

- Use finger and hand puppets for making up stories or plays. Begin a story and let the children make up their own endings.

- Talk to a child through a puppet. This often brings out inarticulate children.

- Teach some stock phrases to handle situations. "May I have this when you're through?" "I don't like what you're doing. Please stop." "May I have a turn?" "May I play with you?" "That hurt my feelings." "I don't feel like playing with anyone right now." Children strike out often because they know no other way of expressing what they feel.

- Have the children retell a favorite story.

- Have a child explain to others who he made a particular item.

- Game. A child names three items or more, each having a specific, common use. Things that go. Things that make holes. Things that keep us warm. Things worn by boys.

- Talk about time. What do we do at the beginning of

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the school day? What did you eat last night? How do you come to school?

- Sit with a child at the doll house. Help to stimulate his talk about family and friends by acting out situations with dollhouse figures.

VERBALIZING FEELINGS

The teacher who understands and accepts herself, who is not threatened by strong feelings in others, is the first step towards helping children explore and express, without anxiety, their own emotional responses. Talking about feelings, letting children know that adults, too, have difficulty, on occasion, controlling themselves, and teaching children acceptable ways of expressing their feelings is all a part of the comprehensive language arts program.

- The song "If You're Happy and You Know It" can be varied to suit the mood.

- Teacher insight. The teacher should come to know each child as fully as possible. Thus she will have an idea of what kinds of situations each child is least able to handle and be on hand when these occasions arise. The child, too, can be helped to analyze which situations bother him most and given the proper tools to meet the threat. For instance, a child who is hyper-sensitive to other children and more than unusually stimulated by noise and people can be helped to alert the teacher when he has reached the limit of his endurance. A quiet place, perhaps just outside the classroom door, and a box of small toys, reserved for him, can be made available. The child who enjoys more than the normal amount of solitude should be protected by the teacher. An ounce of prevention, coupled with insight, will diminish many outbursts of strong feelings and help children to feel more in control, better about themselves.

- Pictures cut from magazines are very helpful for stimulating discussions about feelings. Why is the child crying? What makes people cry? Is the man angry? Do you think this is something which it's all right to be angry about? What does the child feel like doing when he's angry?

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- How do people look when they're angry? When they're happy? When they're sad? What do people do when they have these feelings?

- How do you feel when someone is angry at you? When someone leaves you out? When someone laughs at you?

- Gradually, these discussions expand and the child is led to empathize. How does mother feel when you're sick? When you help her? How does your sister feel when you have a birthday? (Read "A Birthday For Frances".)

- Talk about what is easy and what is hard for each child to do. There are several good read-aloud books on the subject.

- Talk about what children fear. It helps if the teacher will tell about her fears too: mice, snakes, birds, thunder, whatever. It's comforting for a child to know grownups have fears and are able to live with them.

- Talk about frightening situations and how they can be handled. What would you do if.... you get lost in a department store.... you're playing with a friend who is lighting matches.... a big dog barks at you.

- The typical child will learn to verbalize his feelings almost entirely by the end of the Four year; hitting, spitting, kicking, biting in a group are indications that the teacher needs to work hard with individual children, giving them individual help in learning to verbalize.

- "What Do You Say, My Dear?" is a fun book which can serve as an introduction to learning some handy phrases to express common feelings.

- Isolation, in a quiet part of the room can be useful if handled non-punitively. One teacher humorously refers to a special chair as the Rambunctious Seat; another, the Time Out Seat. A child who is naturally fiery and struggling to bring himself into line may actually seek out a moment's peace and announce, "Boy, am I mad! I need my chair." Relegating a child to a corner as punishment serves only to build resentment and accomplishes nothing.

- The child who is making a great effort, even though only partially successfully, needs a verbal pat on the head, at the end of the morning, or perhaps, during the morning. "You are really trying very hard, aren't you? You should be proud of yourself," will often open a brief discussion, such as, "Yeah, I didn't hit Billy when I wanted to and I was sure mad at him."

- Actually, it is the inarticulate child who needs the most work on the teacher's part, although it is often the out-of-control child who receives most of her attention. It takes considerable insight to decide whether a child is naturally reticent of whether he is buffaloed by the noise and confusion of so many peers all in one place. It helps to make an effort to spend a few moments each day with these withdrawing children, perhaps just sitting down beside them at snack time, reading a special book to them, and, always, commenting on their efforts, even though slight, to interact with others.

PROBLEM SOLVING

"Problems" usually fall into one of two categories: those which have right-or-wrong solutions, those which can be dealt with in a great variety of ways. The former will be dealt with in this section and the latter, in the section on creativity.

In general, Dreikur's method of letting a child suffer the logical consequences of his behavior is outstandingly successful, as long as the consequences are not badly damaging to him in some way. "The playground is very muddy so we will need boots this week. We have some extra boots in the coat room, but if we do not have enough, children without boots will need to stay inside and play in the playroom." With Threes, this situation would have to be handled through Mother, but Fours are old enough, usually, to understand the problems involved and more than this, to make very certain they bring boots to school.

- Discussions are helpful here, too. What do adults do that children can't and why is this? Why can adults stay up late, drink coffee instead of milk, go downtown by themselves?

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- Lead children to detect false associations. Is the bath tub in the kitchen? Why not? Do we park the car in the living room? Why not?

- Science experiments are much enjoyed by children. The candle experiemnt, for example, involves a great deal of problem solving. Why did the birthday candle under the little jar go out first? Why did the birthday candle under the big jar stay lighted longest? If the jars are moved, which candle do you think will now stay lighted longest? What is in the jars? And so forth. Shadows are another interesting subject to explore. Can we see our shadows now? We saw them just a short time ago; where have they gone? The teacher seldom offers solutions but guides the questioning so that ultimately the correct colution is reached.

- Being on hand when a child reaches an impasse. Why do you think the guinea pig bit you? What does the guinea pig feel when he is squeezed? Why to you think the tower fell down? What can you do next time to make it more stable? Why do you think the nail won't hold? Here again, the solution is reached by the child on his own, through the teacher's questions.

- There are reasons for the rules we have at school. Why do we ask that you walk up the steps? Look both ways before crossing into the play area? Let someone else play with a toy when you have put it down? Limit the work bench to three people? Ask you to stop building when the big blocks reach to your shoulder? Understanding reasons gives a child security, makes his world a stable, orderly place.

- Give children opportunities to explain why and how they need special attention. There is no reason, usually, why the car wash, built from blocks with endless care, cannot be left up until Wednesday, if they understand there may be other children using it while they are gone! "I think we should go outside today through the window, because I'm tired of going through the door," may be an unusual request but if there is no danger involved, why not?

- Set up activities which deliberately pose problems, if the group can handle them. Nails which are too short Five pairs of scissors for eight children. Observe only, offering no help; childrem may be able to handle the situation

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quite handily without adult intervention. e.g., Group of children cracking peanuts for peanut butter. Some nuts were too hard. They solved the problem by using their fists like hammers and banged the nuts open.

- Stand back. Volunteer no help unless absolutely necessary. Let a child struggle with the door. Let him figure out why his picture has those annoying runny streaks. Let him puzzle over the zipper on his coat or wrestle with his boots. Or, show him how to open the door but then ask him to try it. Help him with one sleeve or one boot and let him do the rest. Exalt with him when he overcomes the difficulty.

- In a group. A child builds two stacks of blocks to same height by using an uneven number of equal-sized building blocks and then explains how he did it. Use 32 or more building blocks which are 3 x 3 x 1½ inches - or any other size where the thickness of two blocks is equal to the length or height of one block.

- Ask the child to explain a classroom problem to the group and have the group offer solutions. The plastic teepees will not stand up on the rug. There are so many children in the housekeeping corner no one can get anything done.

- Dressing dolls for season. Do we need a coat and why? What time of year is it? What did the air feel like when you came to school this morning?

- Teacher's problem solving. A teacher ought to be able to explain her own actions in a reasonable and meaningful way to children. "I think we'll put this book away without finishing it. It's not very interesting, is it?" "I would like you to try this puzzle; it's hard, but I think you can do it now." "When you whistled into the stethescope, it made Terry's ears hurt I decided to put it away; my job is to keep all of you safe."

VERBAL CREATIVITY

All through life, people face endless problems for which there is no right or wring solution. The wife who arrives home late and must somehow contrive dinner from three eggs,

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a handful of peas and some leftover rice is forced to solve her problem creatively, using the same resources that an engineer has when developing a new automobile engine. Children who learn to think creatively will be better prepared to face life later than those who have been denied opportunities for creativity.

Small children, though they have enviable imaginations, are often quite literal and need to be encouraged to think of wild, far-out solutions. A teacher may ask some children what they would do if stuck up in a tree without a ladder. One sober boy might reply, "I would yell very loud and my dad would get a ladder and come get me down." Another child, giggling, might answer, "I'd take some wings out of my pocket snap them on my shoulders and fly down." Either answer, according to the terms of the discussion, is acceptable, although one has the feeling that the Peter Pan youngster will probably enjoy living a lot more than the other.

- Ask children to give answers to fantastic questions. What would you do if you had three hands? If this pencil were a magic wand? If the chair were a cloud? If these seeds were magic?

- Show a picture of a cat's tracks or human footprints across the snow. Or point these out on the playground. How did the tracks get there? Where was the cat going? What did he look like? What was his name?

- Role playing. Create silly situations. The teacher is a dog and a child the dog catcher. Or let children pick silly roles and act out a situation. Or use real situations, in which problems have arisen, and reverse roles: someone plays the teacher, another the mother, a third, the child. (And pay attention to the child who plays the teacher's role; he may tell you a great deal about yourself, some of which you didn't want to know.)

- Play inanimate objects' roles. In a picture of a helicopter and a car, have one child take each part. What are they saying to each other? What has happened?

- What can you do with it? Present surprise box, perhaps full of feathers. What can you do with a feather? Pieces of string? Pine cones? Dixie cups?

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- What could you do to make it more fun, more useful, more helpful? Present a common toy - teddy bear, doll - or a gadget such as a mixing spoon or an eggbeater - or a book about colors or numbers.

- What does it look like? Use children's paintings, odd drawings by teacher on the blackboard, or prints of abstract paintings.

- What does it make you feel like? Use classical music or an abstract painting.

- What if? Make up situations and ask children to respond... What if you fell into an enormous hole? What if you had a lollipop which was too heavy to lift? What if you found a monkey on your porch? If the teacher has trouble thinking up these sorts of things, let the children volunteer. They enjoy it!

- Finish a story. The teacher (or a child, begins a story. "Here we are in the jungle. Our guides are leading the way. When we look up, we see..." The story moves from child to child.

- Revamp old songs. And poems. Or stories. Turn "Red Riding Hood" around and make the wolf the good kid, dutifully going to Granny Wolf's aid, with Red Riding Hood an unruly little junior hood. Stop in the middle of "Little Miss Muffet" and let the spider do something else for a change.

- Think up new routines. Children will ask to eat their snack in the park, on the floor, out on the playground. If someone wants to wear his coat backwards, just to see how it would feel, encourage him. Sometimes changing a stale routine gives a morning a whole new freshness.

- Use a tape recorder. Children can choose a picture from an assortment and make up a taped story about it. These can later be played back for fun, or be copied down and make into a book. A group story may be recorded and played back. Children love to hear themselves on tape.

- Allow children to help make decisions. If the noise level has become horrendous, for instance, the teacher may

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say, "I think we have a problem around here lately with the noise. Everyone is having such a good time, I hate to keep shushing them. But my ears hurt. Does someone have any idea of how we can solve the problem?" And when one is offered, "Do you think that would work?" And if it might work, of course, it is actually tried.

DRAMATIC PLAY

A phrase which the nursery school teacher hears over and over again is "Let's pretend that...." Or "Pretend like ...." During free play time, in a relaxed atmosphere, children are busy in the housekeeping corner, dressing up, building with blocks, playing with cars and trucks; all of these activities involve dramatic play. Less obviously, children looking at books, painting pictures, or examining a beetle through the magnifying glass are engaged often in pretending. Audibly or in an internal dialogue, the small child has a remarkable facility for playing roles. Encouraging a child along these lines, to verbalize his fantasies is another facet of the language arts program.

- The well stocked doll corner is grand, but not necessary. Children can make a block serve triple duties as an iron, a telephone or a plate. A table cloth, a bib, a diaper or a baby's blanket all materialize from a square of fabric. One of the common problems in a doll or housekeeping corner is how to accomodate several children; this is best solved by limiting the number playing in this area or by suggesting new roles for newcomers to play. "Why not let Kevin be Uncle Abner, who just got back from hunting lions?" is a better type of solution than "Of course Kevin can play. We're all friends at nursery school." Usually, unless the role playing deteriorates into discus throwing with the dinner plates, action in the doll corner sustains itself happily and it behooves the adult to stay away and observe and listen!

- Dress up clothing, with a generous supply of male attire, is another self-sustaining activity which requires no assistance other than an occasional pinning-up and without travail, the teacher permits little boys to experiment in high heels and net skirts, little girls to try on vests and neckties. Conversation normally accompanies these acti-

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vities but sometimes, the actors need to be encouraged with, "You look as if you might be going to a party." "You look so pretty," seldom elicits any response except, perhaps, "Thank you." A full length mirror for the frank admiring of one's self in different clothing is very desirable. There are some children who will carry on long conversations with their new images.

- Field trips give scope to dramatic play. Save the fire hat and put it out after the trip to the fire station. Buy a set of little plastic animals just after the zoo trip. Children will work out and verbalize their recent experiences with very simple props.

- Provide lots of scarves, old hats, odds and ends like ...kmen's gloves, paper leis and so on. They stimulate the imagination.

- Puppets, made by the children or ready made, provide opportunities for role playing. Probably the puppet which looks vaguely like a pig but would also be a cat, with a little imagination, will be used more than the puppet who is Woody Woodpecker to the life, complete with a ring to pull to make him laugh.

- Halloween masks, bought cheaply the first of November, their elastics replaced by heavier elastic material or simply ties, provide lots of fun. Sometimes a shy child will open up like magic when he pretends to be someone else, secure in a mask. There are also boards with hand holes which the child stands behind, and devices something like sandwich boards which can be made from tag board.

- Acting out familiar stories is enjoyed by most children, although the competition over who will be the Star is often disruptive. Try to pick a story, or add new roles to an old story, in which half the class can participate one time, the other half, another. This way, there is an audience.

- Start small. Act out phrases or words to begin with. Later, a part of a story can be enacted, or a nursery rhyme. Finally, the group might be ready to put on The Three Pigs in its entirety. It is highly improbable that there is a budding Shirley Temple in the group; be careful to treat the

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production as something less than dress rehearsal at the Actor's Playhouse.

- Use for background a large piece of newsprint or butcher paper extended between two poles, with a light behind it. The story of the "Three Billy Goats Gruff" is easy to use for this kind of shadow show. The characters can be made of tagboard. Glue a long stick to the back of the cut out so it can be manipulated. Teacher can read the story with the children speaking the parts.

- Taking children to a play or puppet show may be worked out as a field trip. It's fun to go behind scenes then, to see what a stage is like, how makeup is applied, and so on.

LISTENING

Anyone who has ever hailed the same person, at the same distance, with the same volume, to announce the serving of dinner or the approach of bedtime knows that hearing is not the same as listening. One may have the auditory equipment of a rabbit; unless he can attend to and make sense of the sounds he hears, he cannot be said to be listening. It is possible also to hear and yet not understand the words. Further, we listen for more than the sense of words: inflection, intensity, tone, distinctiveness are some of the other auditory qualities which affect listening.

In the pre-operational stage, children are developing the ability to make inferences from the sounds they hear. They begin to concentrate for longer periods and at the time, are physically able to hold themselves still in order to concentrate. They are rapidly developing skill in auditory discrimination, or the ability to select certain elements from what they hear and order these elements rationally.

To develop skillful listening, preschool children need to be exposed to a wide variety of auditory experiences. They need to practice listening and repeating what they hear. They listen to and reproduce patterns. The curriculum also provides many activities designed to increase the attention span.

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LISTENING EXPERIENCES

Certain times of the day make better listening experiences than other. Free play time is active, exuberant, social. It is better to choose a period when concentration is easier, when trying to develop listening ability.

Rest time, with the room darkened and calm (hopefully), can be very successful if the record or story chosen for this period is of great interest to children. Relaxed, and in a sense, isolated, they can fully enjoy a Misterogers record, a story told in song, or a short fairy tale or other good story, such as Oscar Wilde's "The Giant's Garden".

- Read-aloud time exposes children to a variety of new words, which they can understand with the help of the accompanying pictures. Stories which rhyme can be called to their attention and later, they will enjoy thinking up their own rhyming words.

- At other times, the teacher may use a tambourine, or a drum. Have the children close their eyes and listen for soft or loud, slow or fast.

- A variety of instruments can be laid out on the science table. Children will experiment with the sounds these make and later in the morning, the teacher may turn her back and sound each instrument, asking the children to guess which one they hear.

- Turning her back, or using a simple screen, the teacher may clap her hands, tap a drum, snap her fingers, or whistle, asking children in turn to identify the sounds.

- Play a record of bird calls (perhaps the cardinal, grackle, robin, sparrow are good ones to begin with) and later, outside, try to identify some of these.

- Play on combs, covered with waxed paper. Fours can learn to do this and like it.

- Let children experiment with an autoharp.

- Fill glasses with different amounts of water and let children ping and listen for various sounds.

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- Put rhythm instruments on the science table, where individuals can experiment with the various sounds.

- Encourage piano playing with one or two fingers, asking the children to try to make a sound which is pleasing.

- Have children differentiate the sounds of the various animals portrayed or characterized by various instruments in "Peter and the Wolf". (Caution: some are terrified of this record.)

- Use a tape recorder to:

Record sounds outside, to be listened to later.
Record sounds in the room: water running, blocks falling, coughing, sneezing
Record sounds on a field trip: the zoo; the printer's, the fire station.
Record special sounds chosen beforehand by the children: crying, laughing, hammering, sawing

- Give each child a toy animal, or a picture of one. Teacher makes the animal sound and the child with the matching animal brings his picture to the teacher. (Good only if the teacher is skillful at this. Some can growl and bark. Others fizzle at this.)

- Play echo. Sort of an auditory follow the leader game. Or have each child echo a sound the teacher or another child makes.

LISTENING AND REPEATING

Children at this age should be able, after practice, to repeat four one-syllable words, sounds, nonsense words, and so on.

- Familiar phrases such as fee-fi-fo-fum are easy to do. A favorite story read often encourages repetition skills.

- Children like singing familiar songs: for clean-up, nursery rhymes, commercials while acting out the task involved in the song.

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- "Ring Around the Rosy", "Cobbler, Cobbler, Mend My Shoe" are simple songs which involve repetition. Other songs: "One Elephant Began to Play", "Upon a Spider's Web", "Old Mac Donald", "There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly" (spider - bird - cat - dog - cow - horse).

- The teacher may pause during the reading or telling of favorite stories, such as the Three Pigs and let children supply the missing words or phrases.

- Flannel board stories. First, the teacher tells the story and then the child repeats it.

- Game. Word repetition plays a part in many games, such as "Big ball, roll to Susan."

- Tongue Twisters. The old familiar "rubber baby buggy bumpers" and "Peter Piper" are still favorites of children.

- Counting off rhymes. "Intry Mintry Cutry Corn" and "Eenie Meenie" are only two of many found in children's anthologies.

- Tape nonsense syllables and ask children to repeat them.

- Seat children in a circle. Begin by saying that Aunt Sadie is taking a trip to Tulsa and in her suitcase she put a nightgown. Each child then repeats what went before and adds on.

- The child repeats a sentence which the teacher says, stressing the same words the teacher stresses, with the same inflection.

- Telephone. One child in the circle repeats a brief sentence to the next child and so on around the circle until the first and the last stories are compared.

- Letter sounds. The teacher may say, "I'm thinking of a word which begins like baseball." At first, several "B" words may need to be used as illustrations. Later, only one may be used as the key word and the child who thinks of another "B" word is now the leader. The children can then

begin to associate the sound with the picture of that sound, or the letter B.

LISTENING AND REPRODUCING PATTERNS

- Various sounds can be used to vary this practice in reproducing a pattern. Hand clapping, a drum, a note on the piano, a triangle. Begin with simple patterns and create more complex ones as children mature in their ability to repeat.

- Experiment with the patterns of children's names. Carla McDowell sounds like Kevin Van Osten. Have children make their names in drum beats.

- Listen to a rhythm band piece. Divide the group into two or three smaller groups. Experiment to see which group can reproduce most truly the rhythm.

INCREASING ATTENTION SPAN

Although as previously stated, the read-aloud story time is primarily intended to increase a child's pleasure in books, a corollary result is that often the child's attention span seems to be increased by this experience. A good, absorbing story, which invites attention, makes concentration fun.

- Game: "Simon Says". Make it simple and make the directions interesting.

- Tell a story in which certain words call for a certain response on the children's part. The one about the boy going bear hunting is fun, or just make one up.

- Following directions. The Three can respond to two simple directions (such as "touch your head and jump on time") and by the end of the Four year, more complicated directions, sometimes as many as four, can be followed.

- An occasional all-group craft project, perhaps making a wreath with cotton balls at Christmas time or an apple turkey at Thanksgiving gives the teacher a chance to see

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how the group as a whole is able to concentrate on following simple directions. It's easy to find the child who's having trouble in a project of this kind and he can be worked with later, individually.

- Be careful with the youngster who appears not to be paying attention at all. There may be physical reasons (temporary deafness, mild hyperkineticism, any mild sort of upset) which prohibit him from sitting still, or attending or both.

- Keep careful anecdotal records on those who are having trouble attending. Note how long the child is able to attend. If improvement is slow, but steady, perhaps the child needs another year before kindergarten.

- Teacher gimmick. Speaking in a whisper. Waiting until the room is quiet. Beginning to talk, slowly and quietly, until gradually the hub-bub abates and children begin to listen. If you cannot get the attention of the majority of the group, there is something amiss. Perhaps the children have been sitting too long. Perhaps what you have planned is dull. Perhaps you are expecting too much of this group.

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